The Language of Motion

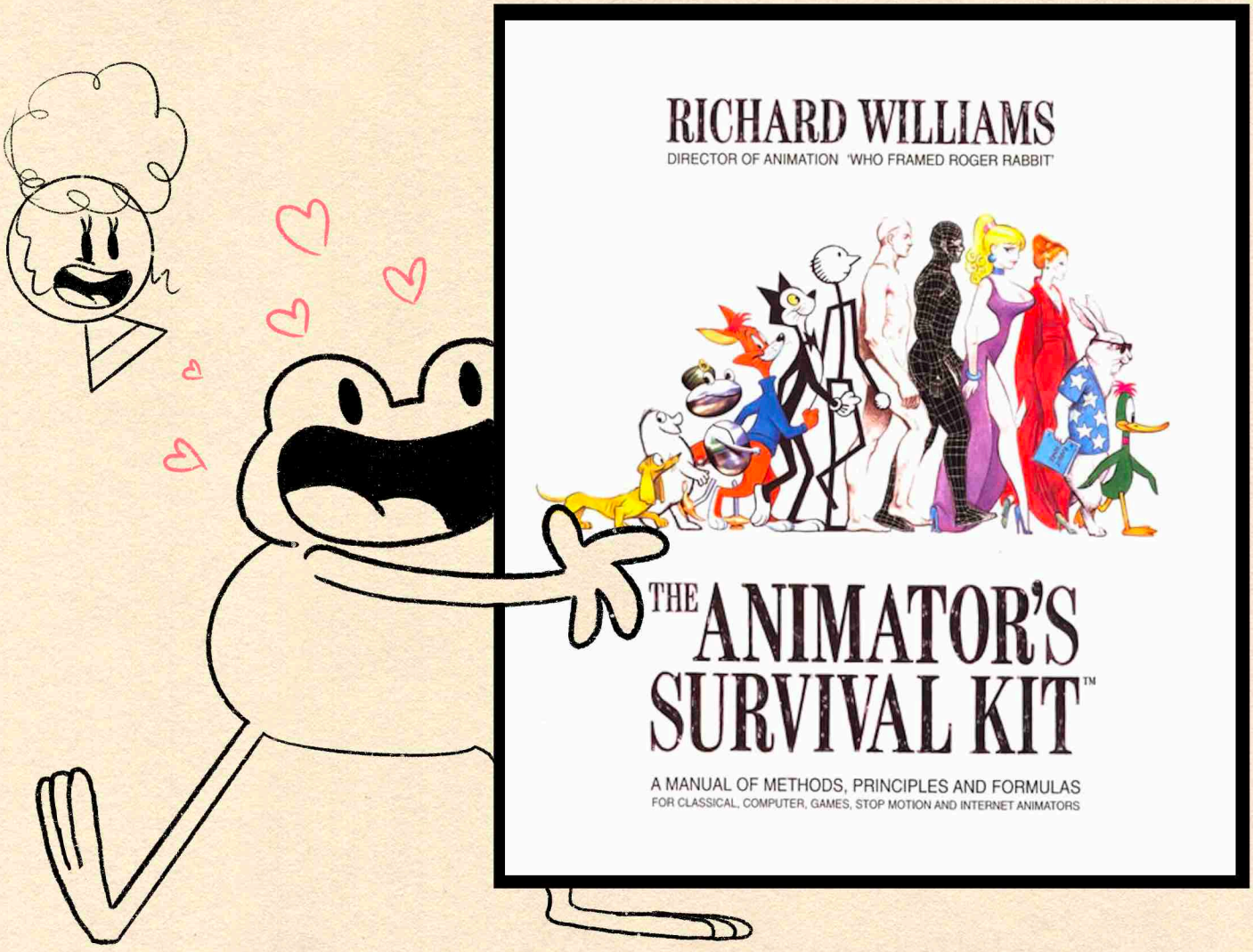
By

Kevin Del Valle

Disclaimer

This small handbook contains summarized information found in Richard Williams's "The Animator's Survival Kit".

This handbook is not affiliated and lacks the rich depth that the actual book it references, I encourage every reader to seek Richard's book. This handbook's purpose is for beginners to have a quick and accessible version


RICHARD WILLIAMS
DIRECTOR OF ANIMATION 'WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT'
THE ANIMATOR'S SURVIVAL KIT™
A MANUAL OF METHODS, PRINCIPLES AND FORMULAS
FOR CLASSICAL, COMPUTER, GAMES, STOP MOTION AND INTERNET ANIMATORS

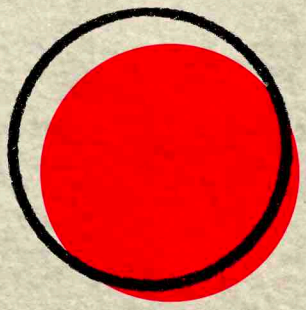
CLARITY PRECISION ECONOMY

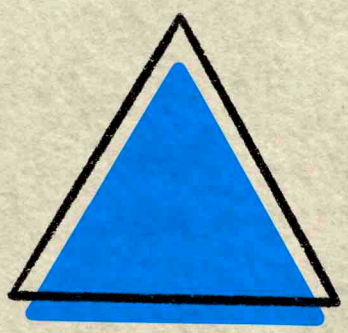
"Today's obsession for speed and quantity has profoundly influenced the ways in which we think and feel.

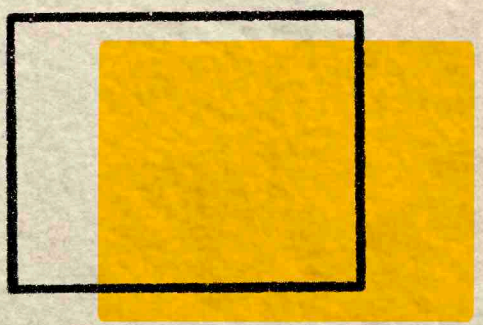
There is very little time now for the perception of unnecessary details. The duration of the visual impression is too short.

Clarity, Precision and Economy are compelling values in a world suffocating in the fight of cross-purposes"

-Gyorgy Kepes (1949, Function in Modern Design)







Welcome to Principles

1: Solid Drawing

2: Arcs

3: Staging

4: Anticipation

5: Timing

6: Appeal

7: Exaggeration

8: Squash & Stretch

9: Secondary Action

10: Follow Through /Overlapping Action

11: Ease in / Ease out

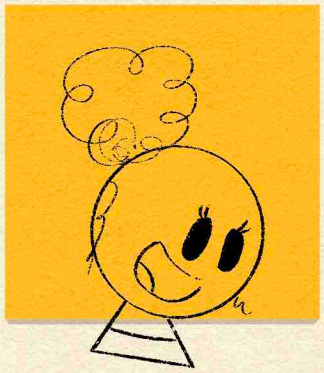
12: Straight ahead / Pose to pose

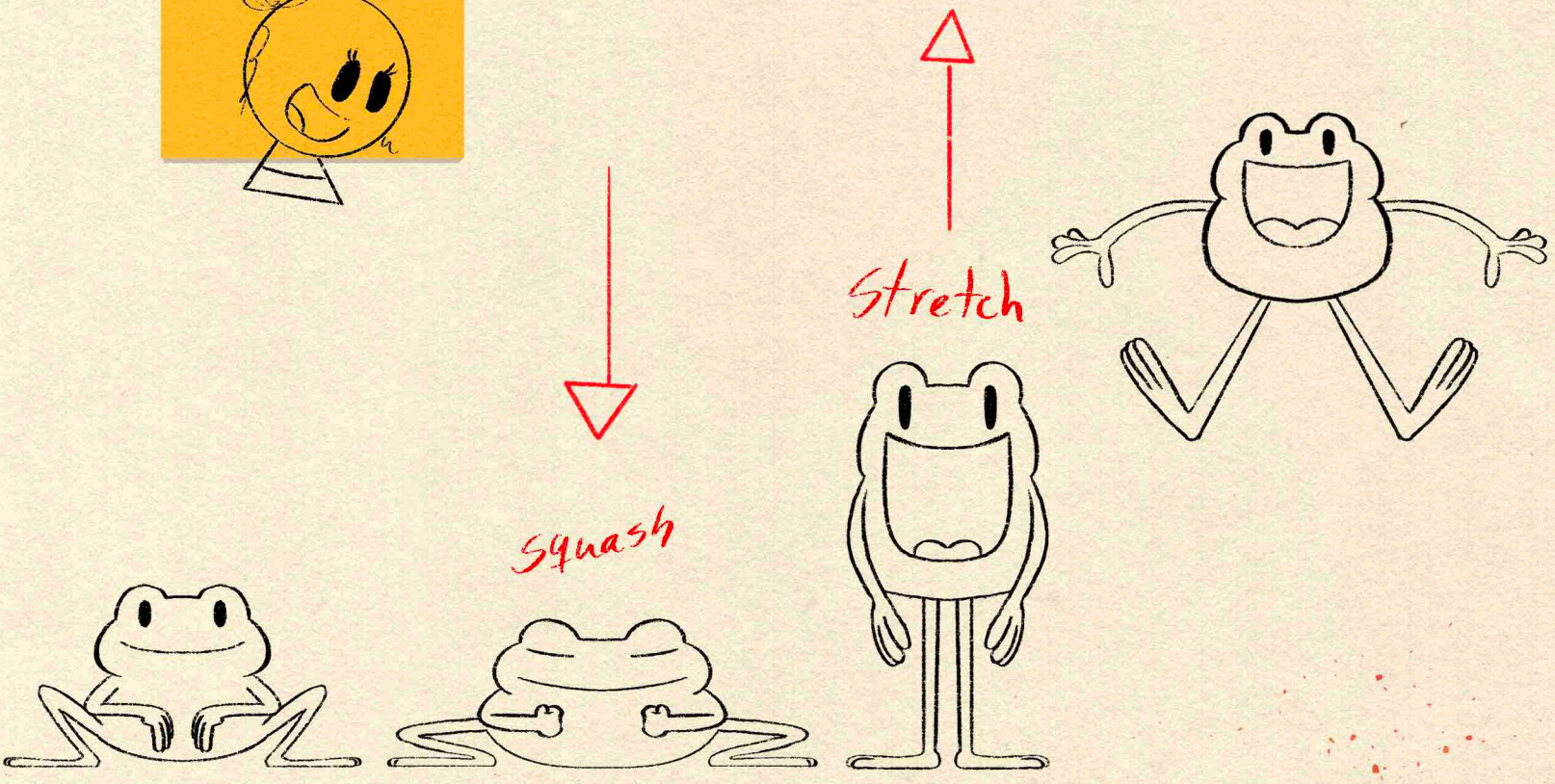
More like,
FUN-damentals

We'll be looking at the 12 principles of animation.
Summarizing information and relaying on visuals for guidance

Squash & stretch

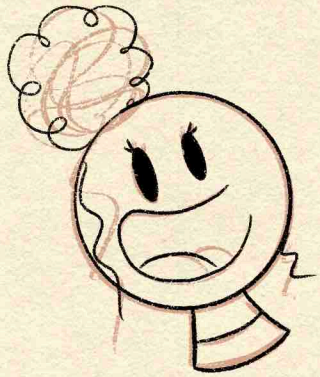
Used to emphasize weight and mass of an object/character. Your character needs to retain a consistent mass throughout its motion





Anticipation:

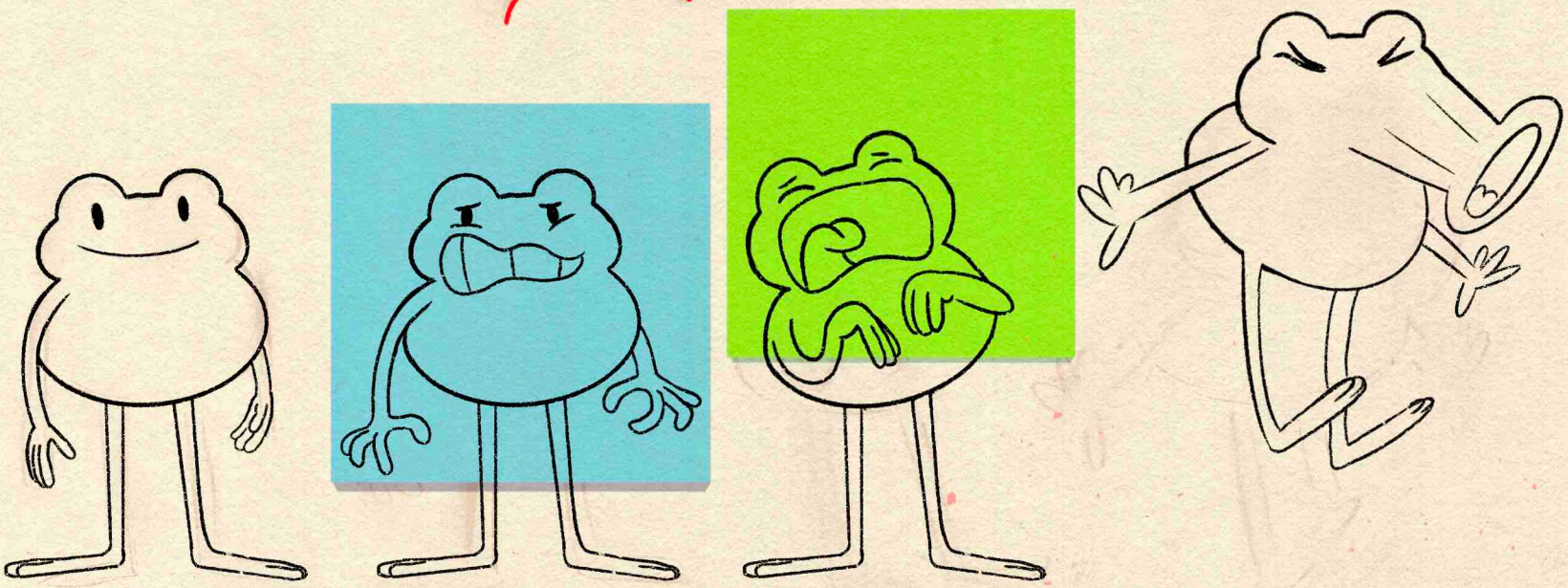
Prepares the viewer for an upcoming action



Anticipation

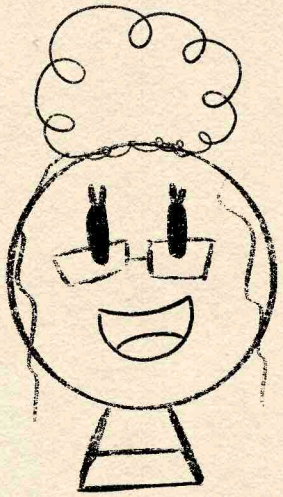
Neutral

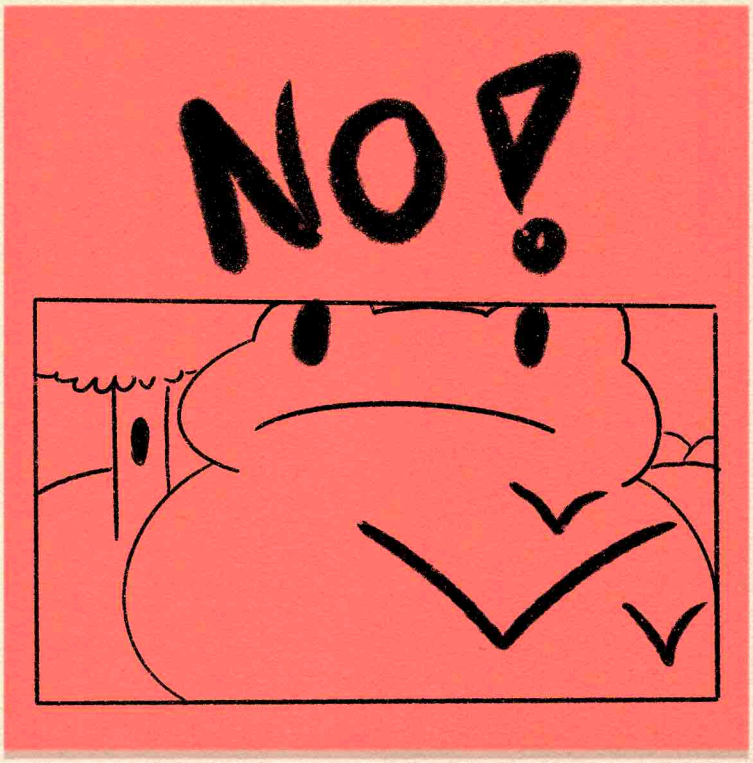
Action

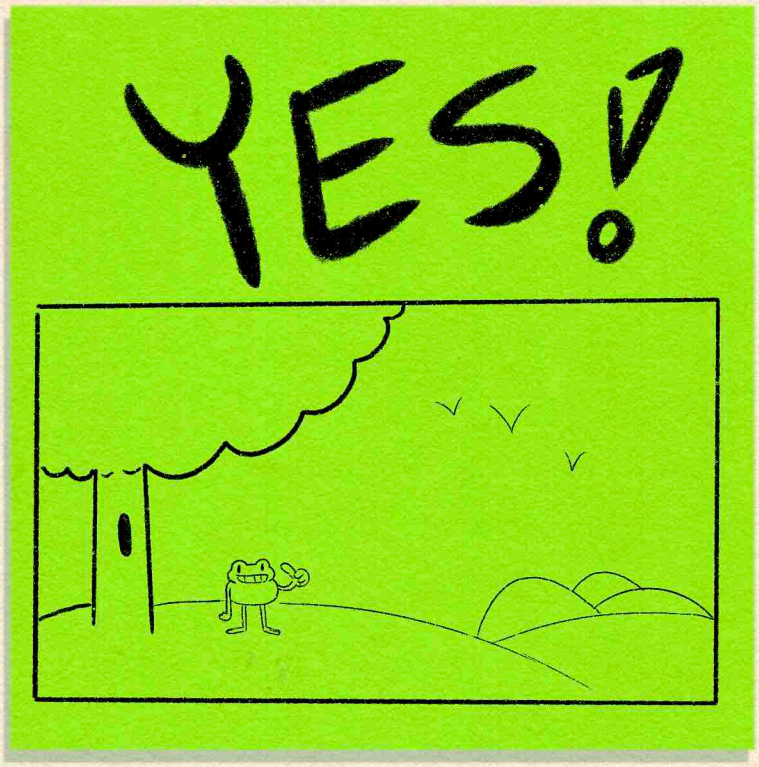


Staging:

A clear composition of your idea.
The clearer the shot the easier it is
for the audience to follow.

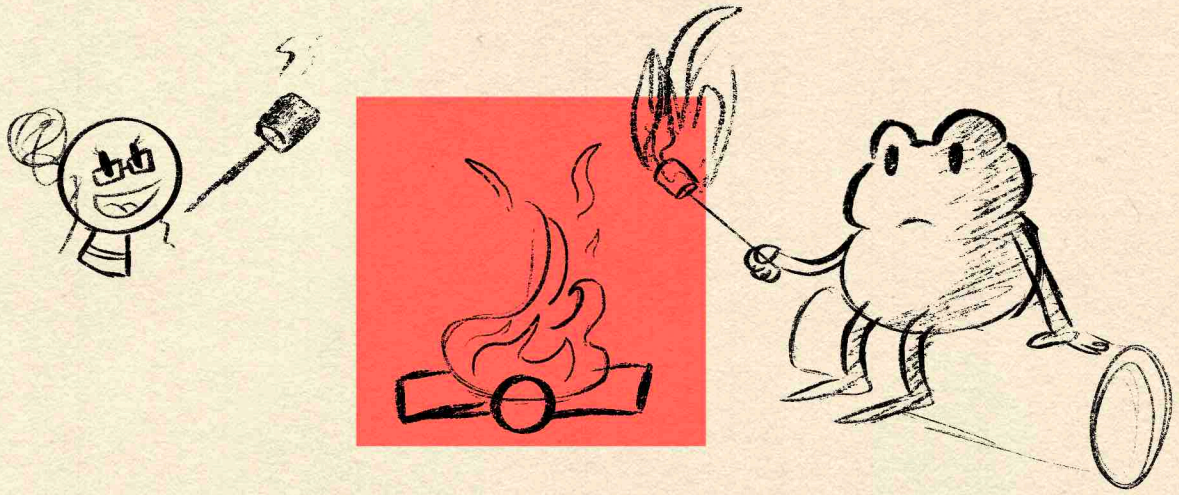






Straight Ahead & Pose to Pose:

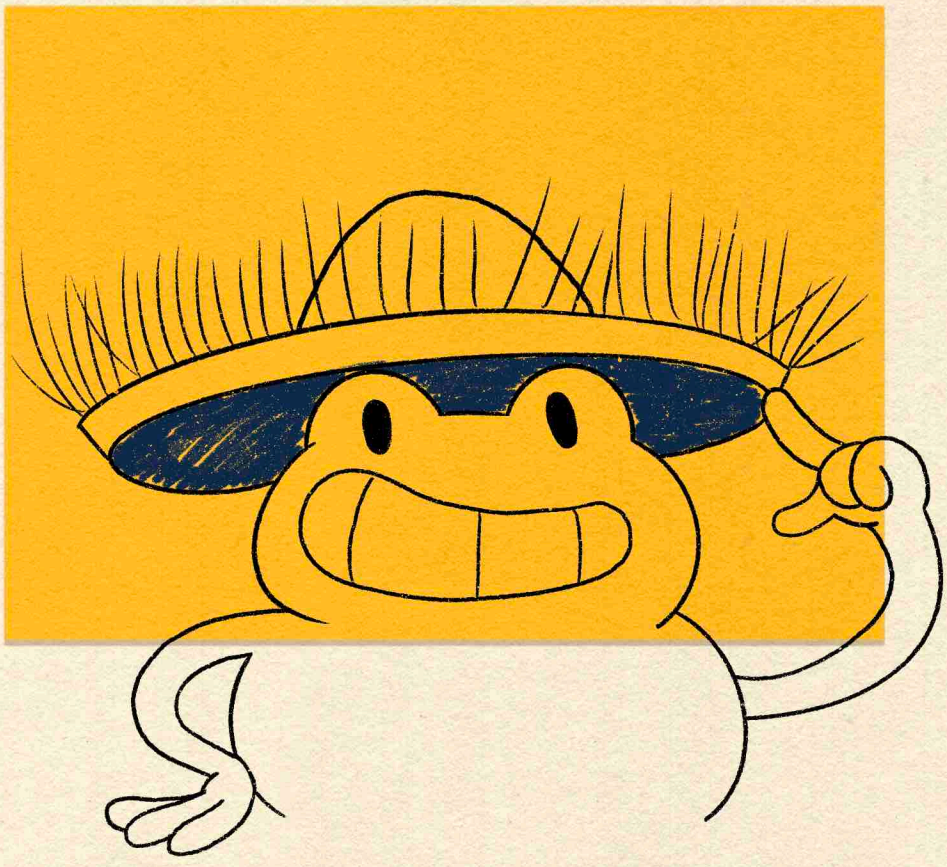
Two methods of animation, straight ahead means you start drawing without planning out your key poses. The best usage of straight ahead is for elements such as fire, water, etc

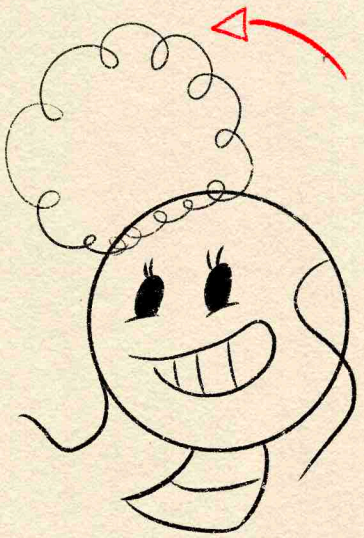


While Pose to Pose is the complete opposite, here you'll plan out your key actions then fill in the rest.

Follow through & overlapping action:

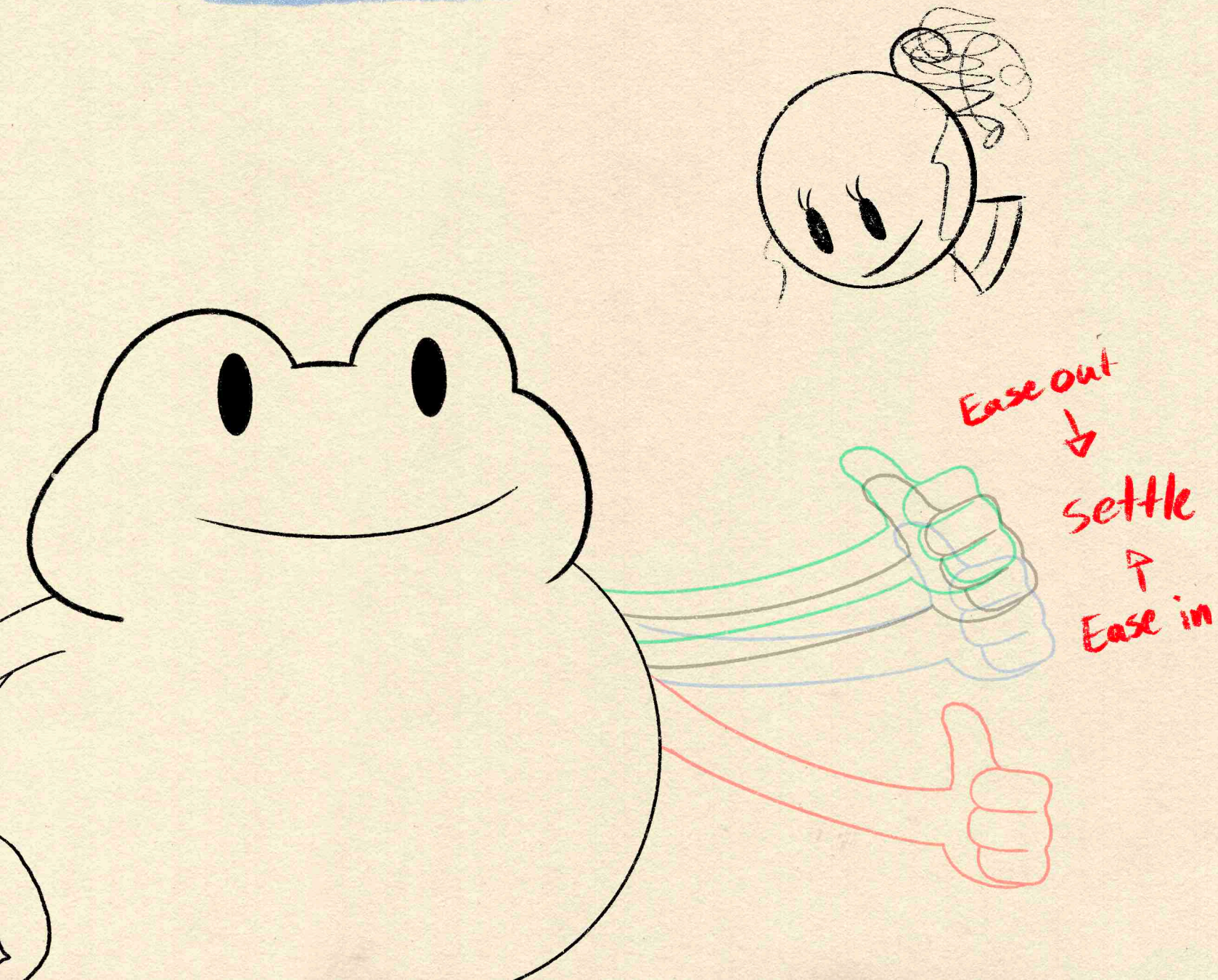
Things that aren't part of the of the main figure will move at a different rate. Any appendages like a tail or hair will continue to move after the character has stopped





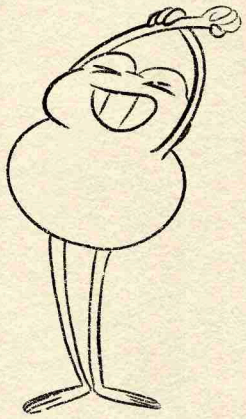
Ease in & Ease out:

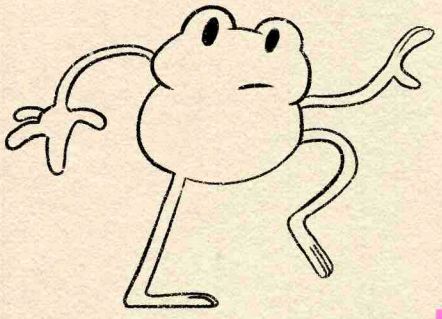
without this, your character will feel robotic, ease in/out helps smooth out your movements and making your drawing feel more alive.

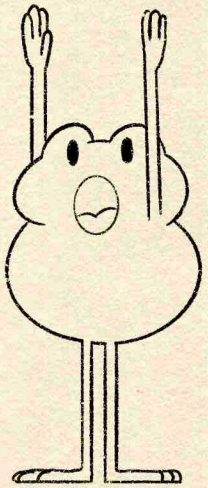


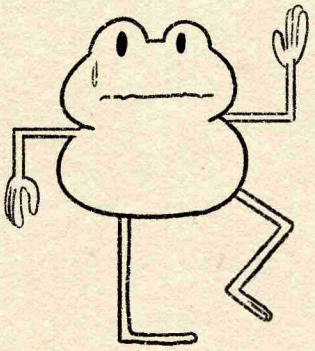
Arcs:

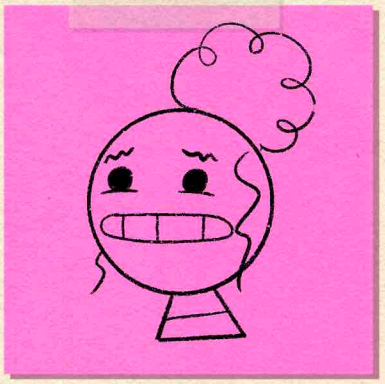
Arcs are crucial for organic movements and posing of your character.





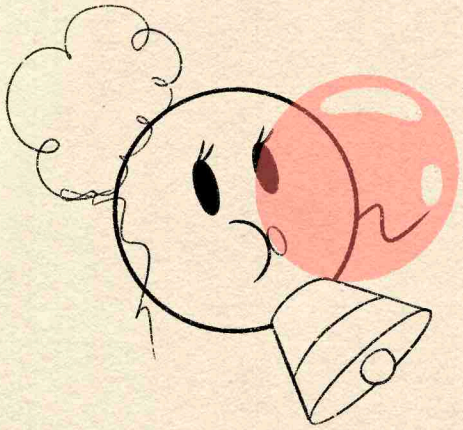


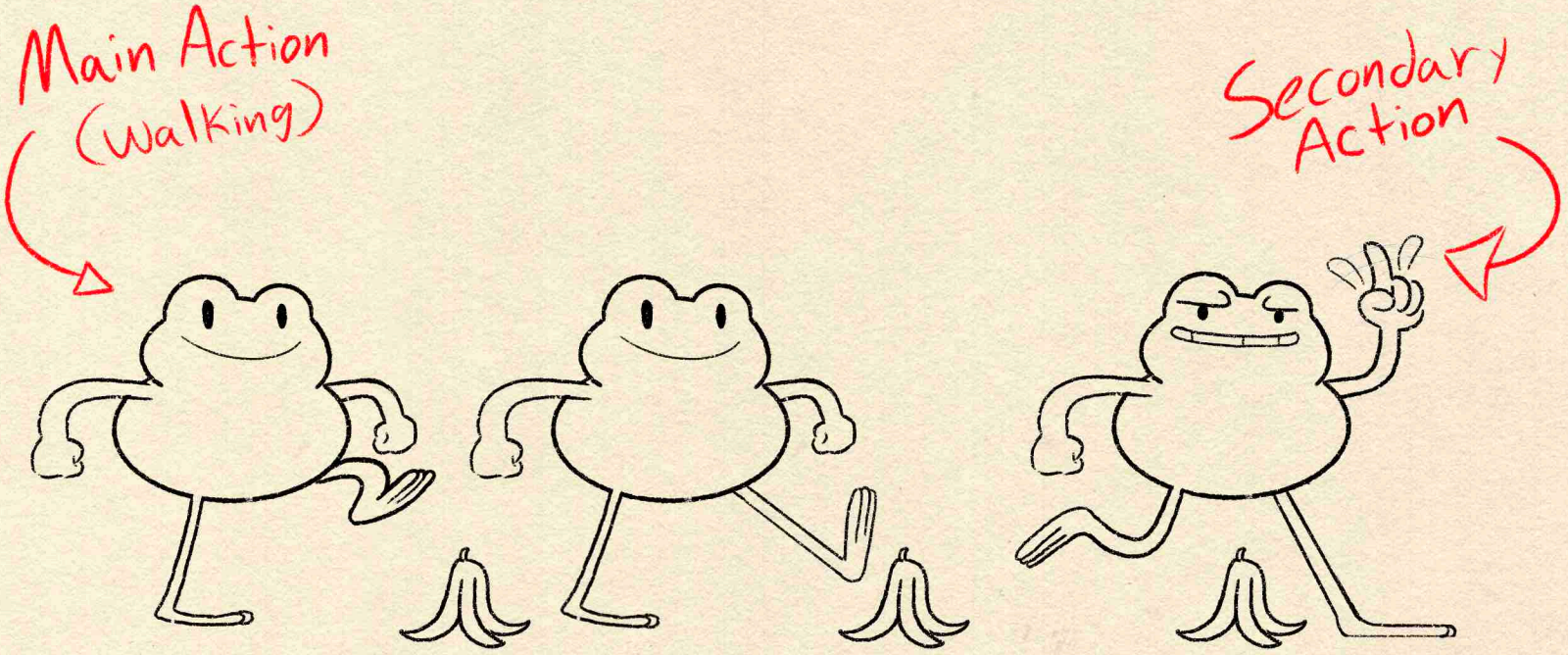




Secondary action:

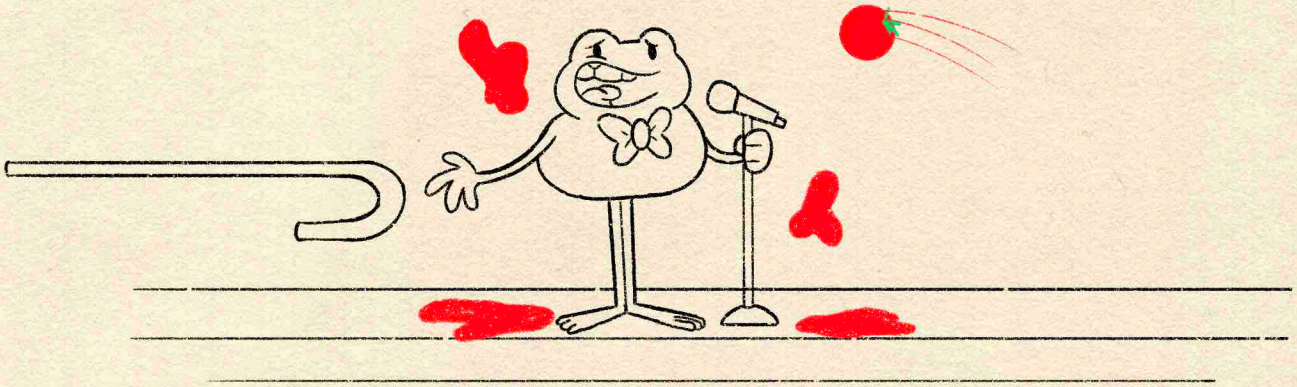
Pushes the main action by adding a subsidiary action within the body.

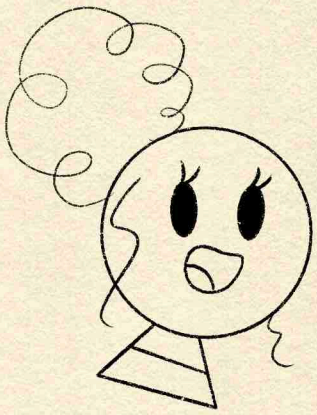




Timing

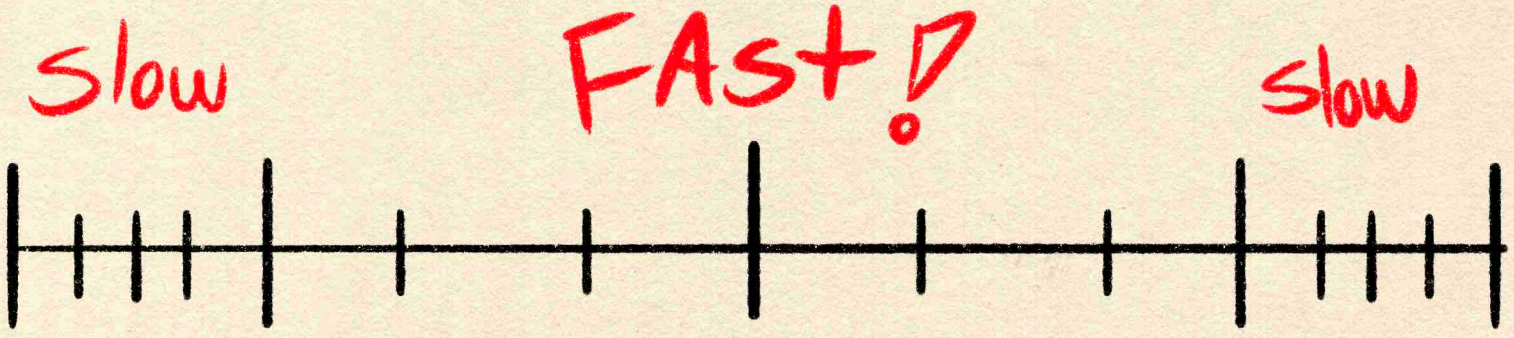
The number of drawings used in any move determines the time the action will take on the screen. Drawing in 1s makes your movements faster and drawing in 2s or more starts to slow down your movements





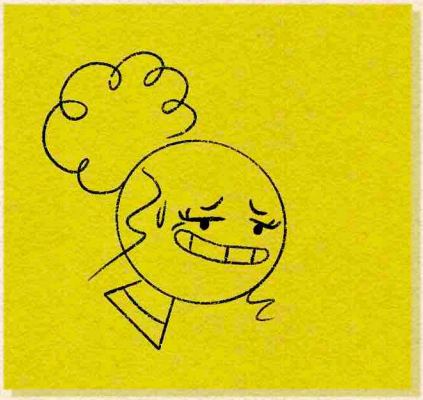
Spacing

This is the distance between your drawings

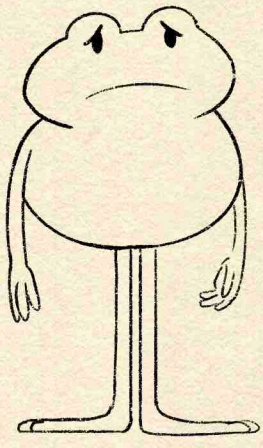


Exaggeration

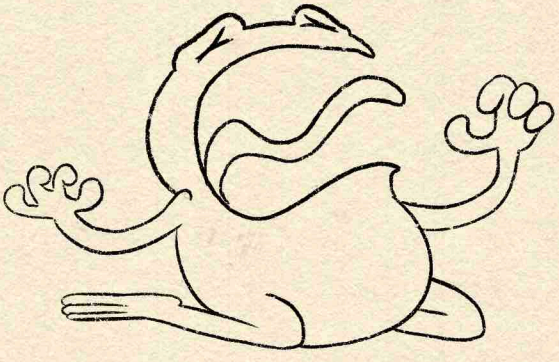
Push whatever it is you're trying to convey more. If a character is sad, make them sadder. Exaggeration doesn't mean more distorted but more convincing! This applies to both acting and movements



Sad

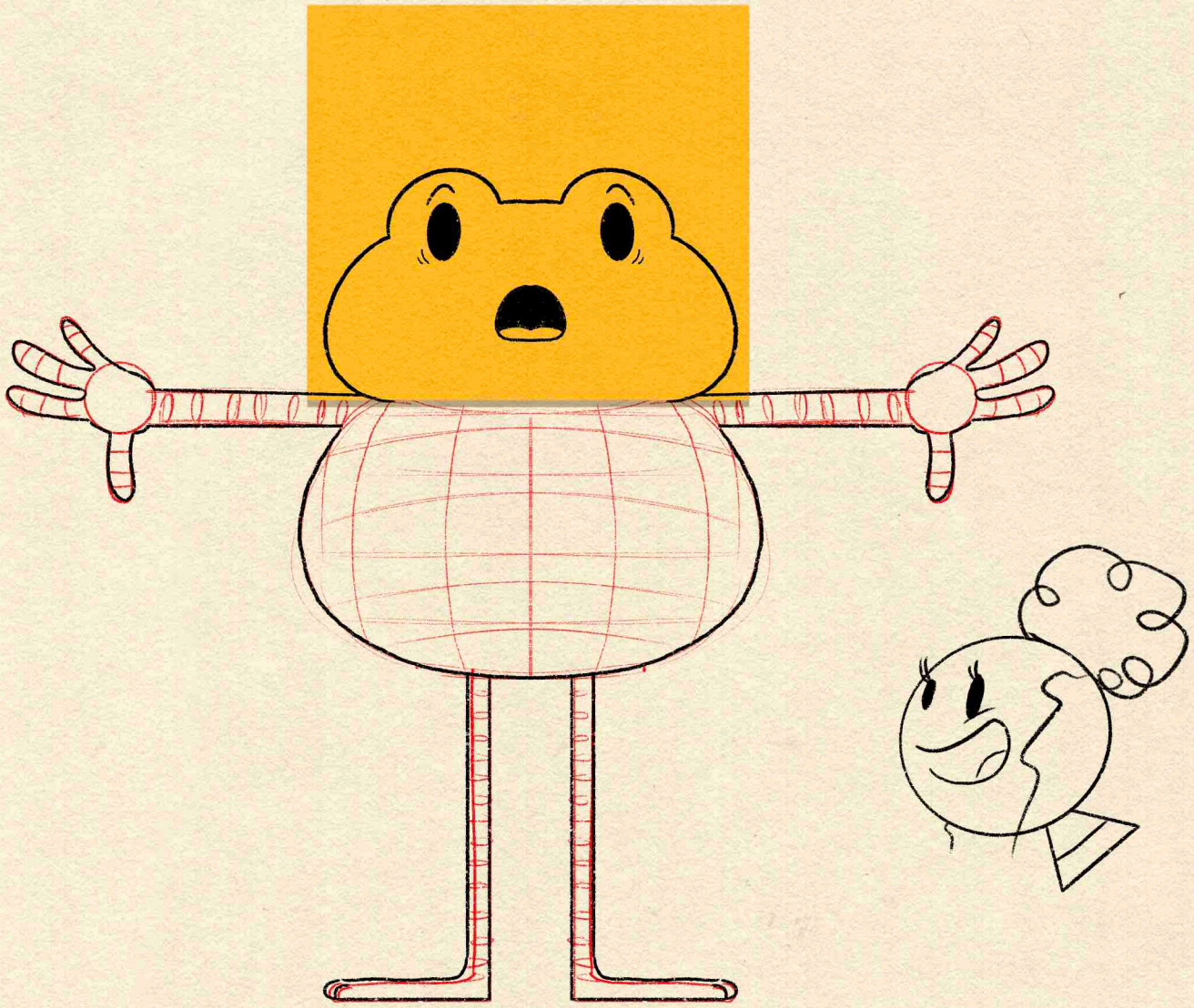


SADDER



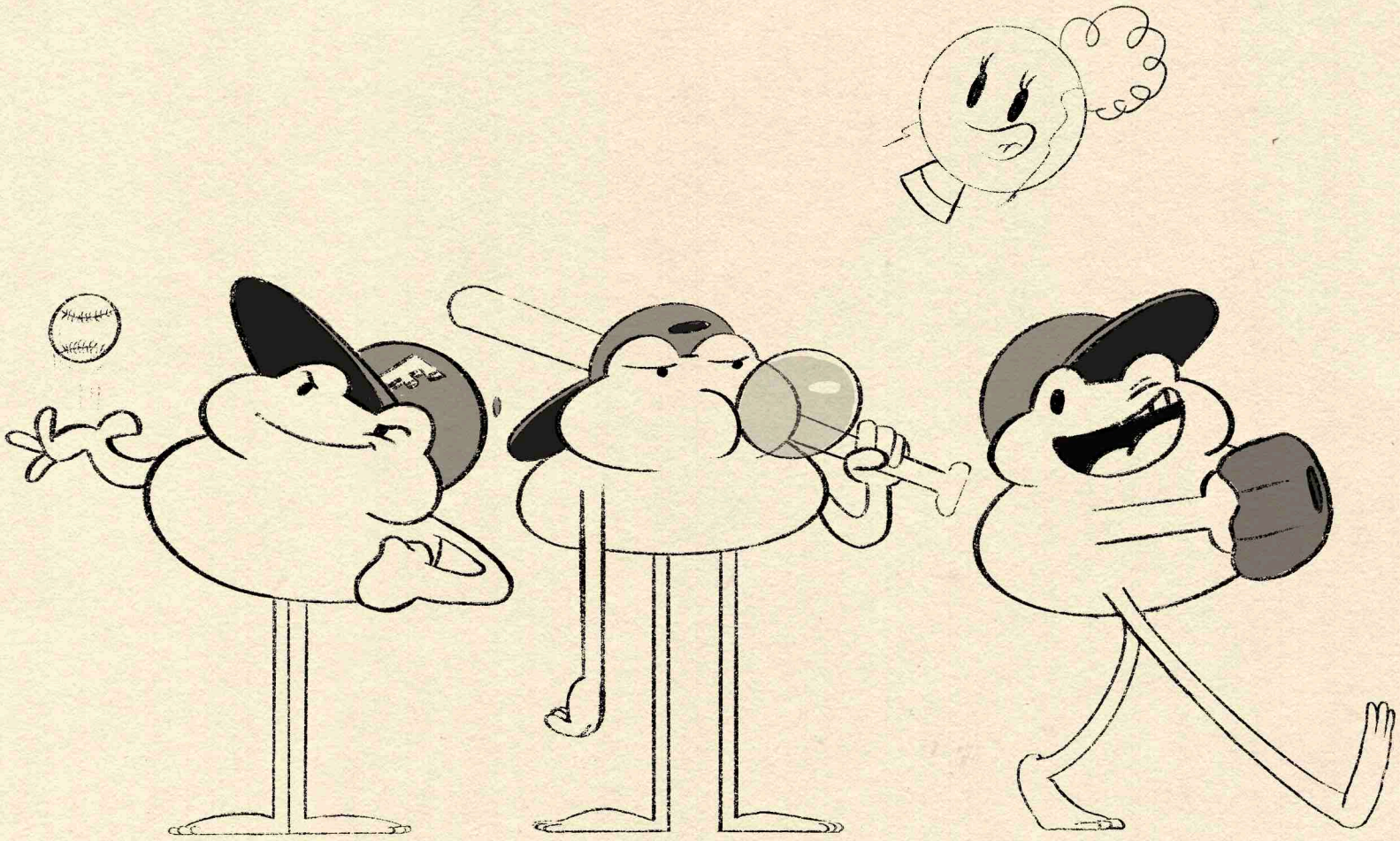
Solid drawing

Making sure a character is in a 3D space with weight, volume and balance. The more you draw the better you get, the easier it'll be for you



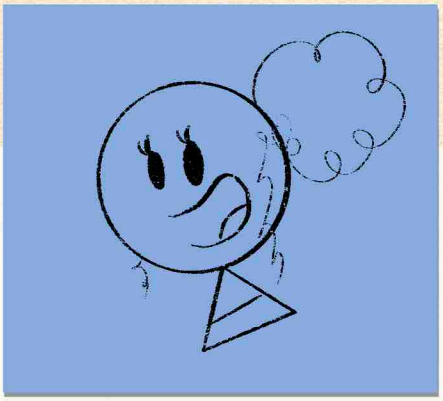
Appeal:

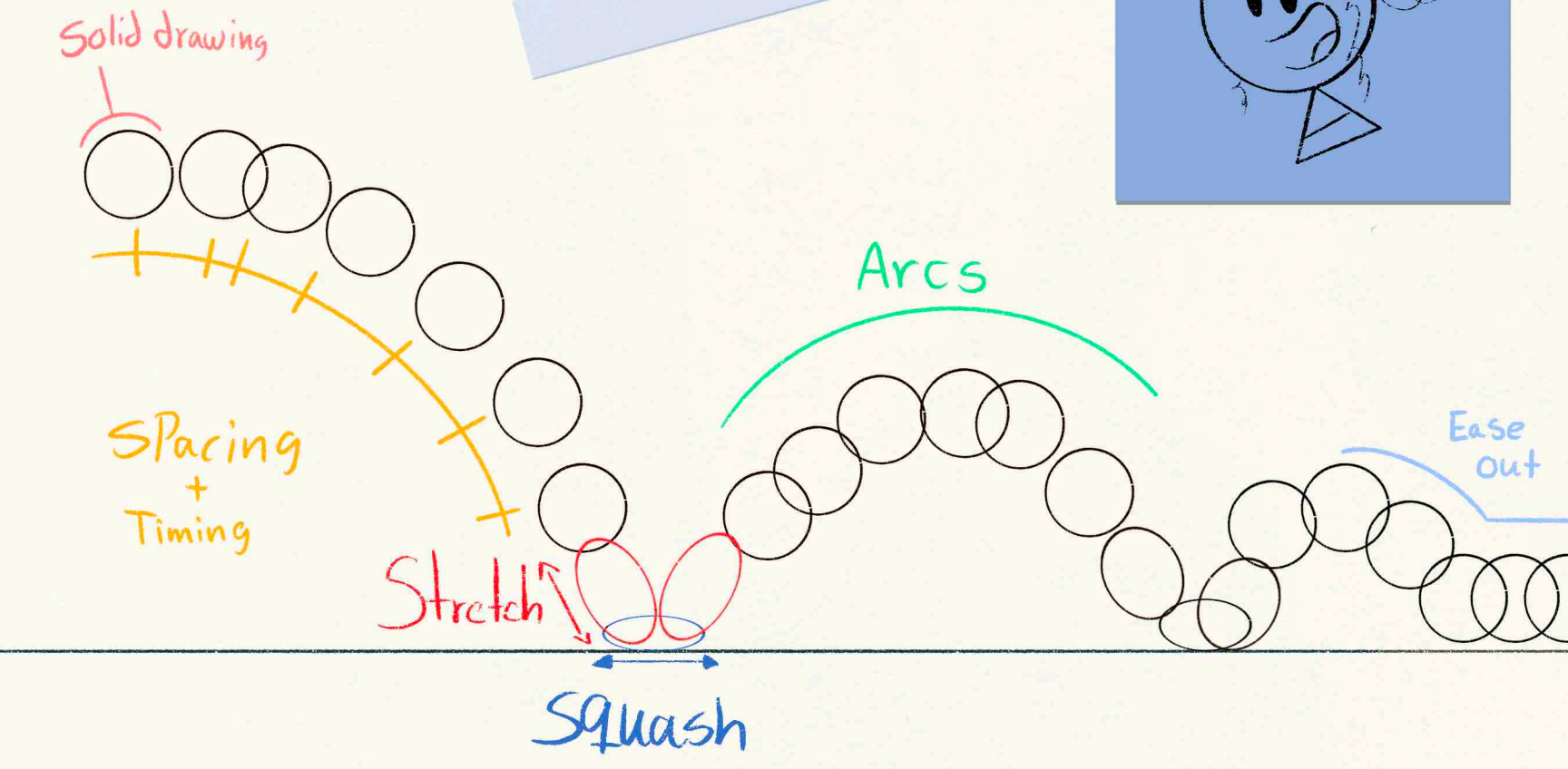
This means your character should be interesting to look at. Play with shapes, simplify and emphasize characteristics that character would present. Actors have charisma, animated characters have appeal.

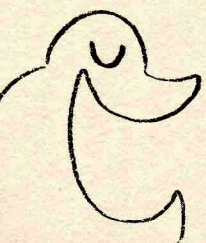


BALL BOUNCE

The ball bounce is the most common exercise you'll come across, it's a simple way to experiment with various animation principles used even in the most complicated scenes

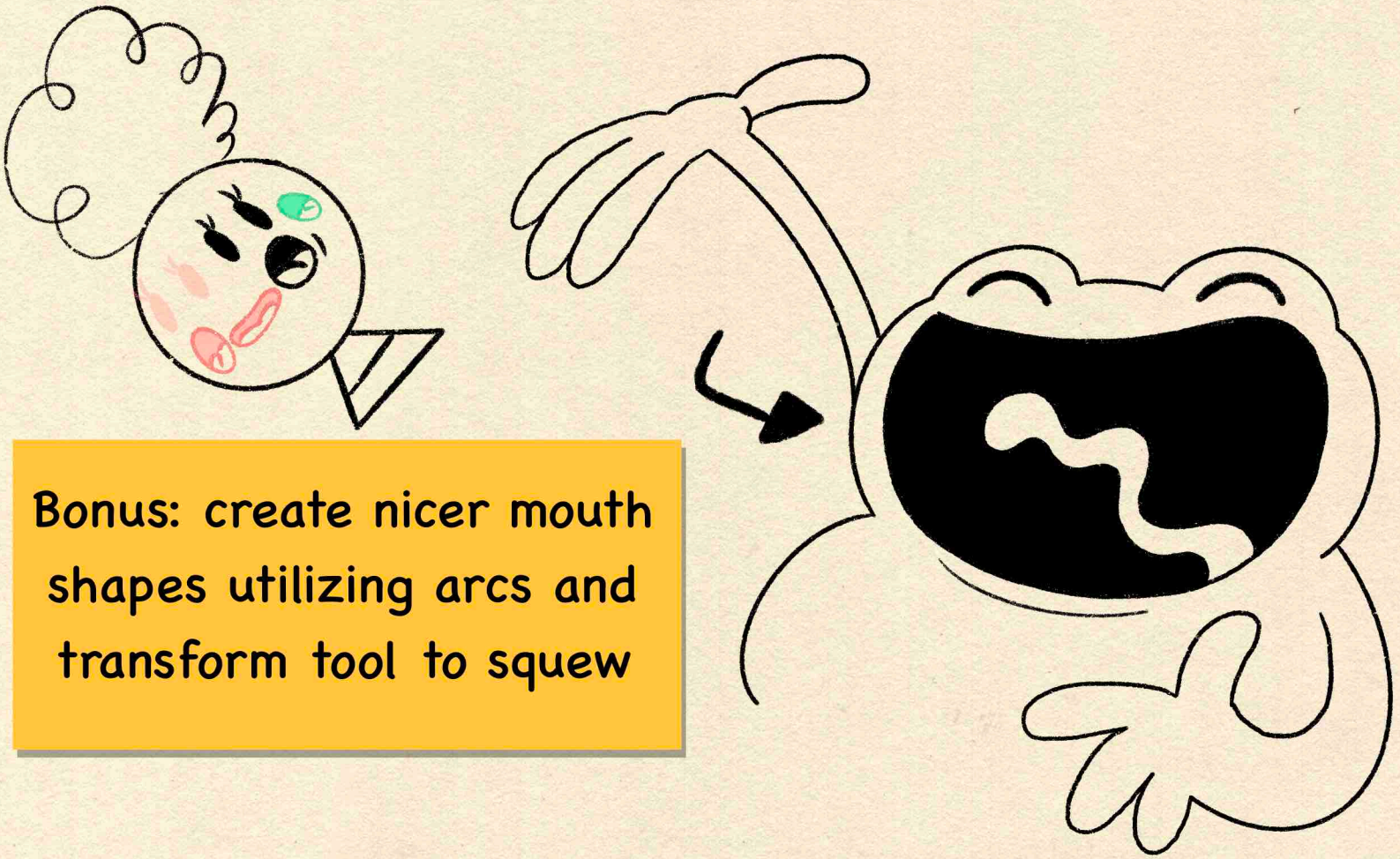






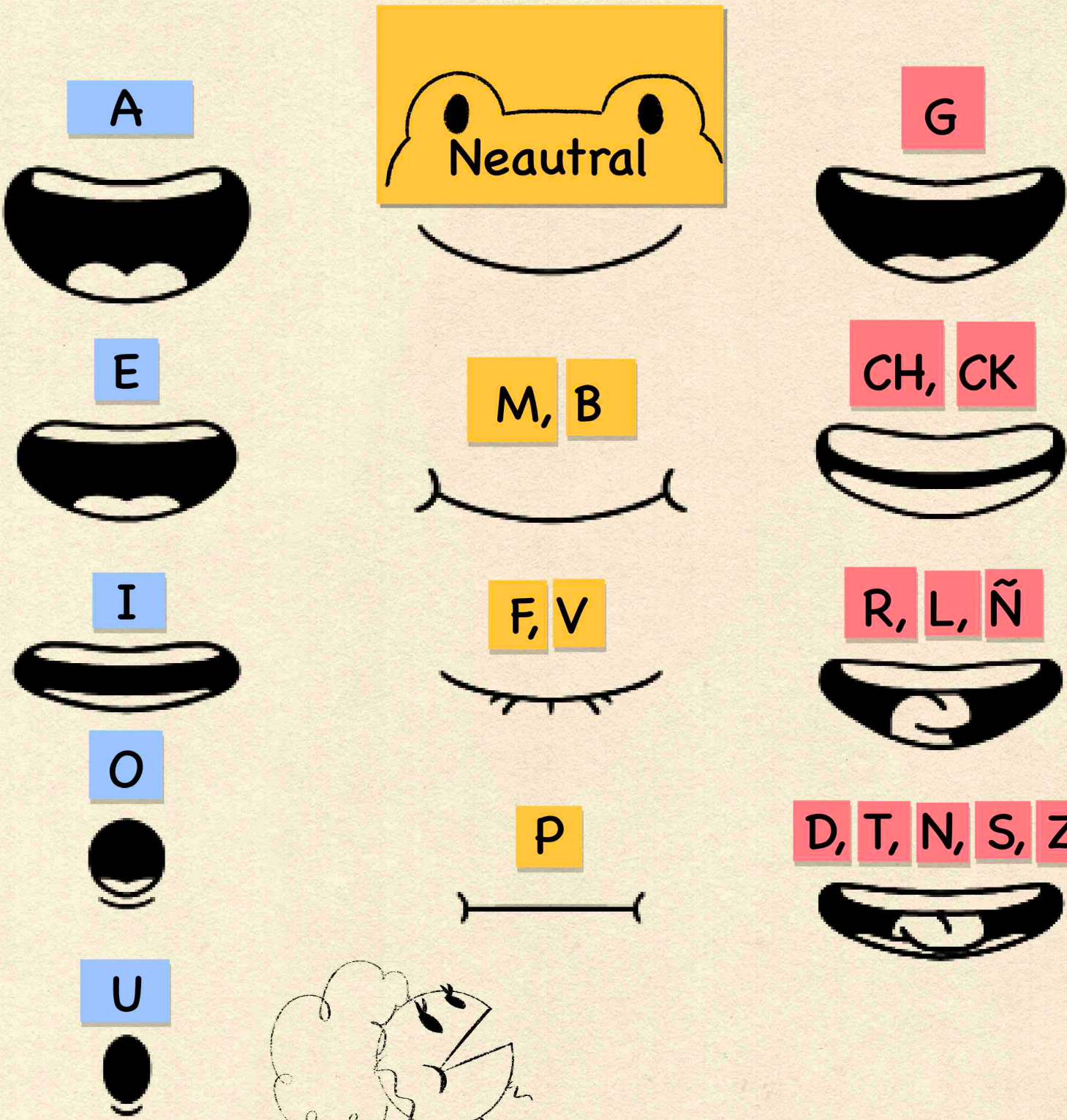
Lip Syncing

Remember that all movements will come from the jaw and sound travels faster than movement, meaning delay your movements so they feel more natural



Bonus: create nicer mouth shapes utilizing arcs and transform tool to squew

Mouths

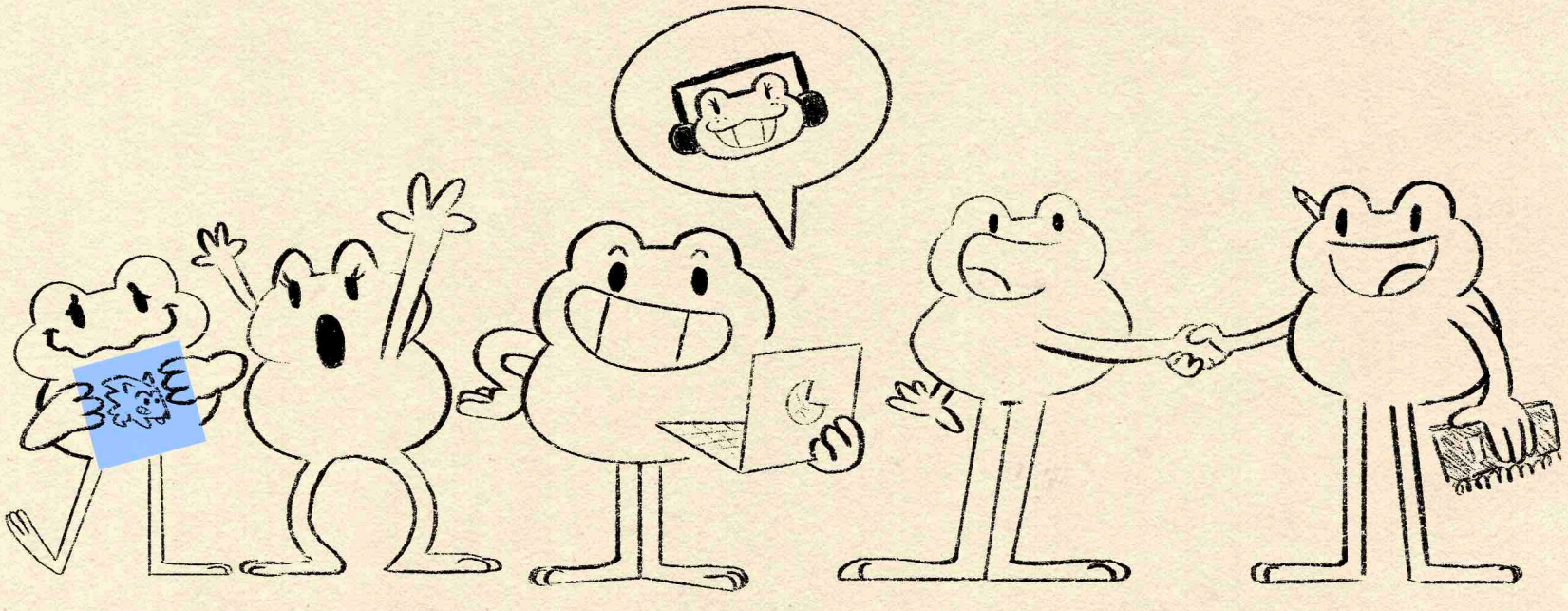


Resources

https://animatorsresourcekit.blog/

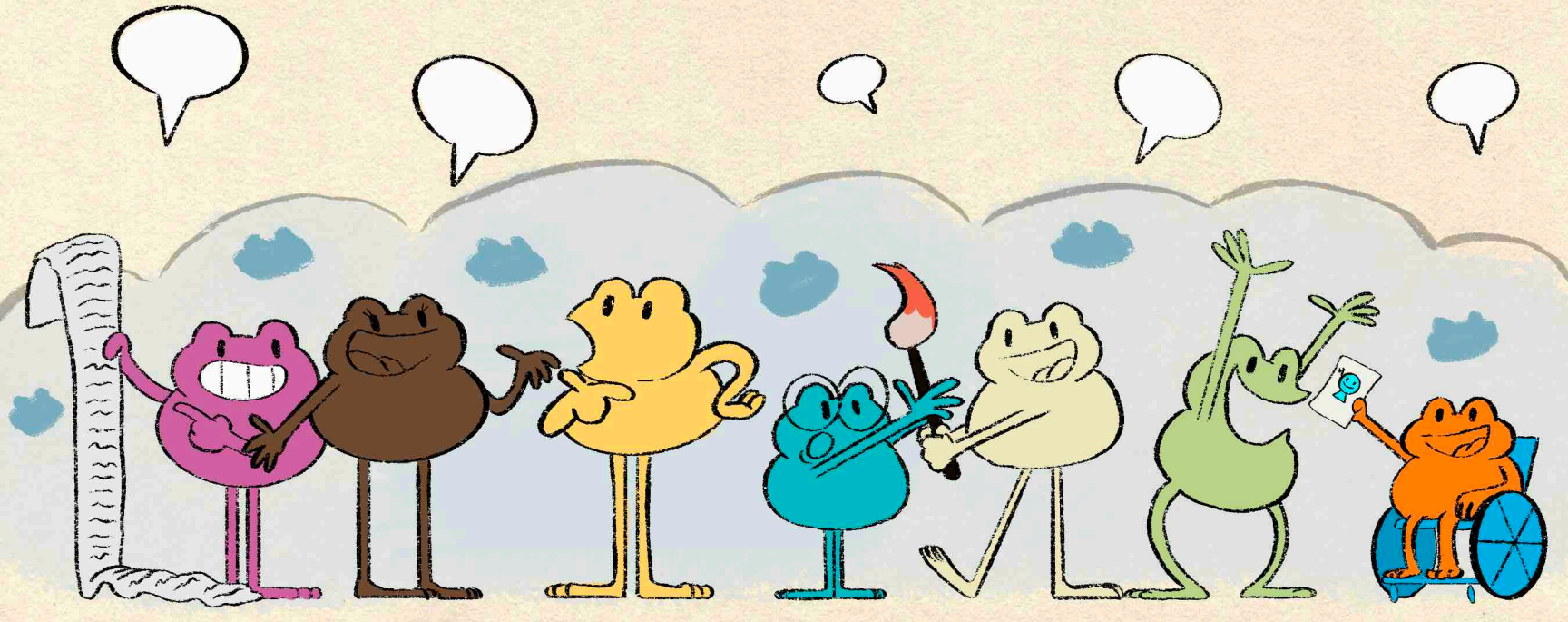
https://krita.org/en/download/

https://youtu.be/uDqjIdI4bF4?si=EP7bp5DhMaMHkAB8

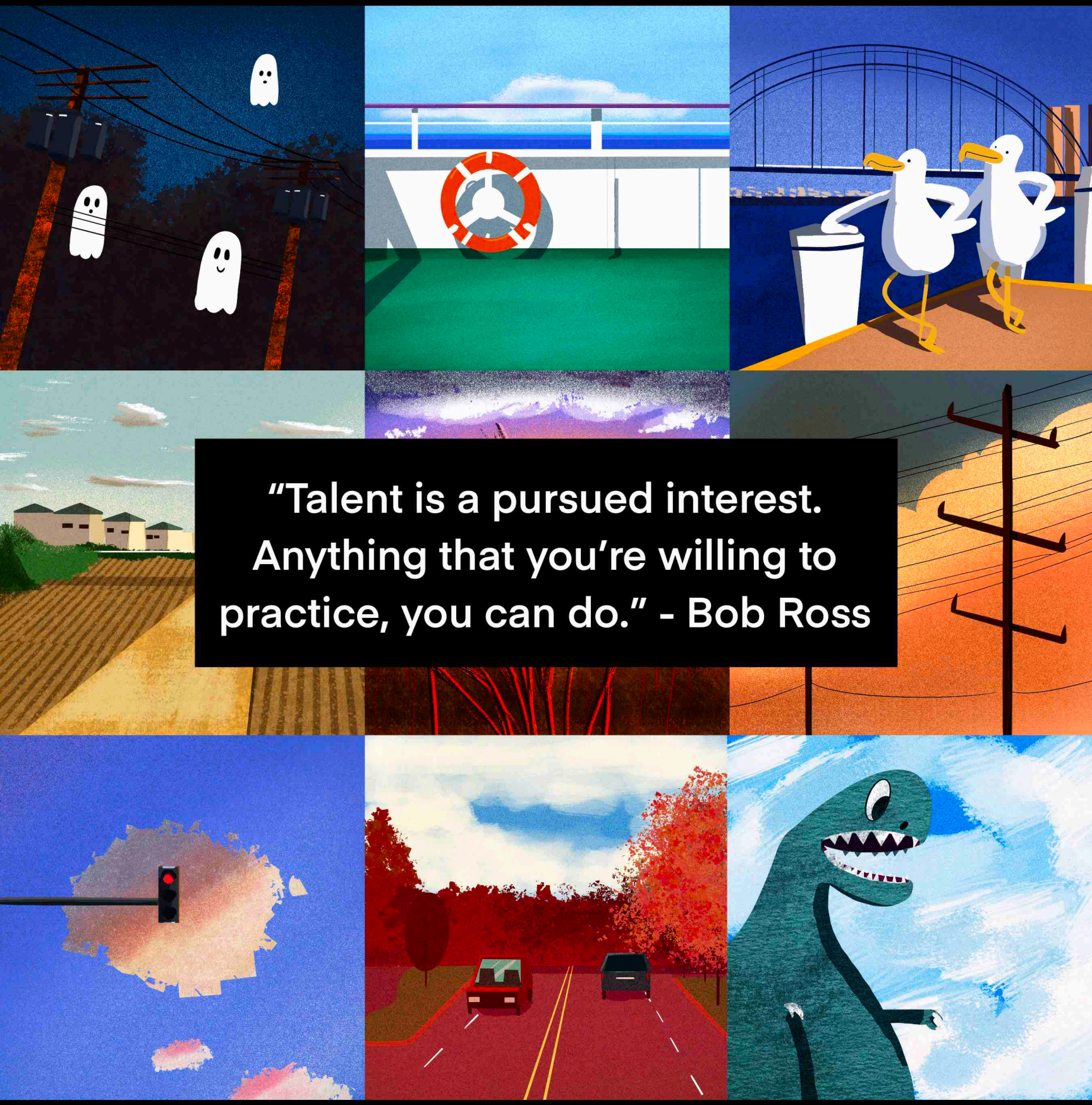


Community

Create community. Be social and be active in art spaces you're able to go to. Share resources and knowledge. Push each other to be the best artist possible



Good Luck


“Talent is a pursued interest. Anything that you’re willing to practice, you can do.” - Bob Ross

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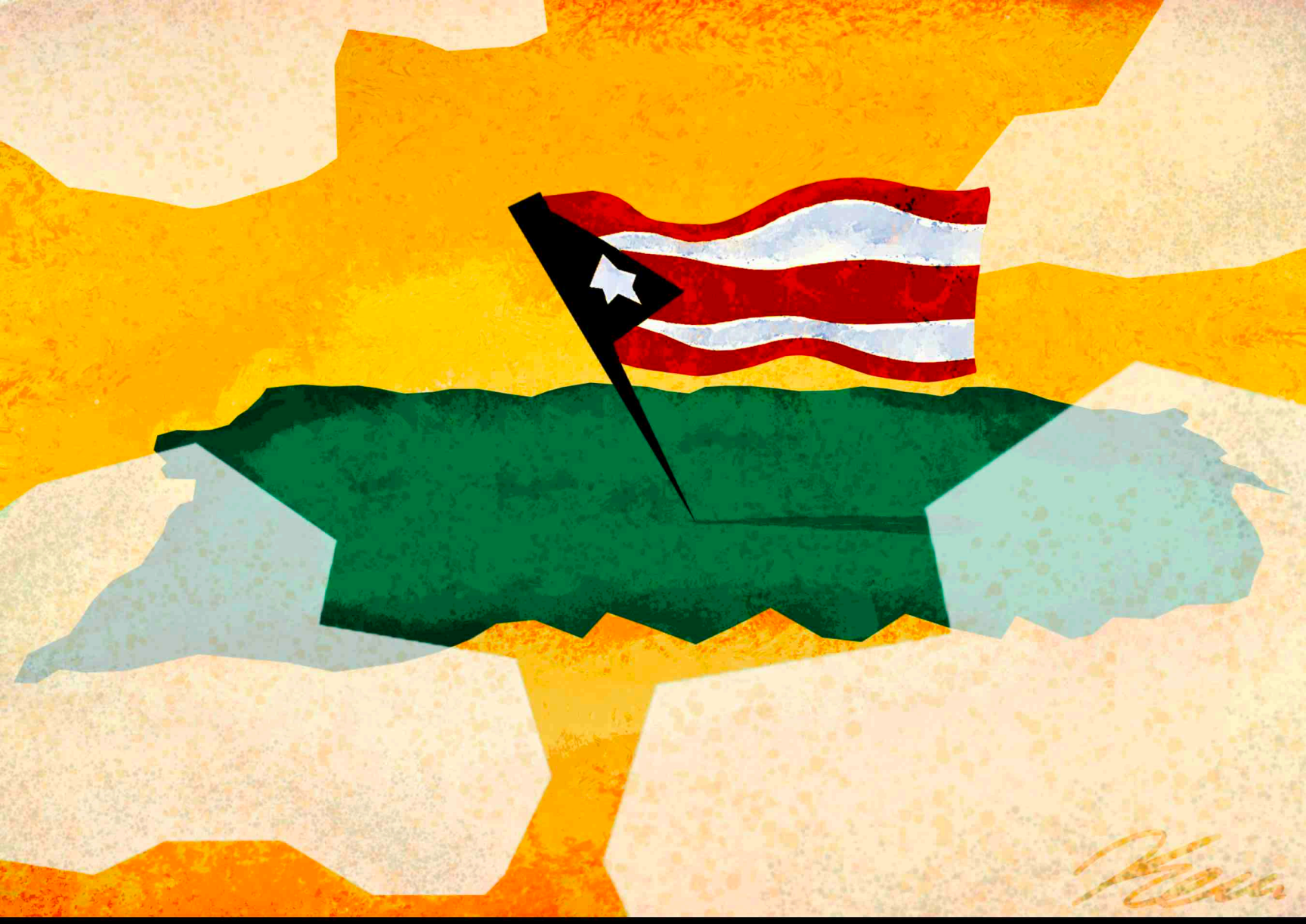

Seguimos Aquí

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2025